

# The Madisonian.

A. P. HILL, EDITOR.

"INDEPENDENT IN EVERYTHING—NEUTRAL IN NOTHING."

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**ADDRESS.**  
To the people of Maryland, Virginia,  
North Carolina, South Carolina,  
Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennes-  
see, Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas, Mis-  
souri, Mississippi and Arkansas.

Fellow Citizens.—In obedience to  
the commands of those we represent,  
we have assembled together to confer  
with each other concerning your rela-  
tion with the general government, and  
the non-slaveholding States of the Union,  
on the subject of the institution of  
slavery. We deem it proper to lay  
before you as briefly as the subject  
permits, the result of our deliberation  
and counsel.

In order that your condition may be  
understood, and the conclusions at  
which we have arrived be justly appre-  
ciated, it is necessary briefly to refer  
to a few past transactions.

It is now sixteen years since the in-  
stitution of slavery in the South began  
to be agitated in Congress and assailed  
by our sister States. Up to that time  
the people of the Northern States seem  
to have respected the right reserved to  
the Southern States by the constitution  
and to have acted under the conviction  
that the subject of slavery being be-  
yond the legislation of Congress, all  
agitation with respect to it on the  
part of Congress was equally forbid-  
den by the constitution. But at this  
time a portion of the people of the  
North began to assail in Congress, the  
institution of slavery, and to accom-  
plish their object of dragging it into the  
vortex of Congressional agitation, they  
claimed the right of petitioning Con-  
gress upon all subjects whatsoever.

As a petition is only the first step  
in legislation, it was clear that a right  
to petition a legislative body, must be  
limited by its powers of legislation.—  
No one can have a right to ask of an-  
other to do that which he has no moral  
or legal right to do. Nor can any  
tribunal have the power to receive and  
consider any matter beyond its  
jurisdiction. The claim therefore to  
present petitions to Congress on the  
subject of slavery, was considered by  
the Southern Representatives generally  
as an attempt indirectly, to assume  
jurisdiction over the subject itself, in  
all parts of the Union. The object,  
without disguise, was the overthrow  
of slavery in the States; but our assail-  
ants framed the petitions presented,  
chiefly against slavery in the District of  
Columbia and our territories, and against  
what they call the internal slave  
trade—that is, the transmission of  
slaves from one Southern State to an-  
other. Conscious of the fatal tendency  
of the agitation of slavery in Congress  
to destroy the peace and stability of  
the Union, an effort was made, supported  
by a large portion of the Northern Rep-  
resentatives, to suppress it by a rule in  
the House of Representatives, which  
provided that all petitions on the sub-  
ject of slavery, should be neither con-  
sidered printed or referred. This rule  
was assailed by the people of the  
Northern States as violating that clause  
of the constitution which prohibits Con-  
gress from passing laws to prevent the  
people from peaceably assembling and  
petitioning for a redress of griev-  
ances. In December, 1844, this rule  
fell before the almost unanimous voice  
of the North; and thus the unlimited  
power of introducing and considering  
the subject of slavery in Congress, was  
asserted. In the mean time the course  
of the Northern people showed clearly  
that the agitation of slavery in Con-  
gress was only one of the means they  
relied on to overthrow this institution  
throughout the Union. Newspapers  
were set up amongst them, and lec-  
turers were hired to go abroad to ex-  
cite them against slavery in the South-  
ern States. Organizations were formed  
to carry off slaves from the South,  
and to protect them by violence from  
recapture. Although the constitution  
requires that fugitive slaves like fu-  
gitives from justice, should be render-  
ed up by the States to which they may  
have fled, the legislatures of almost  
every Northern State, faithless to this  
treaty stipulation between the States  
passed laws designed and calculated  
entirely to defeat this provision of the  
constitution, without which the Union  
would have never existed, and by these  
laws virtually nullified the act of 1794  
passed by Congress to aid its enforce-  
ment. Not content with the agitation  
of slavery in political circles, the North-  
ern people forced it also into the re-  
ligious associations extending over the  
Union, and produced a separation of  
the Methodist and Baptist churches.  
The result of these various methods of  
assailing slavery in the Southern States  
was that it became the grand topic of  
interest and discussion in Congress and  
out of Congress, and one of the most

important elements of politics in the  
Union. Thus an institution, belonging  
to the Southern States exclusively, was  
wrested from their exclusive control  
and instead of that protection which is  
the great object of all governments, and  
which the constitution of the United  
States guarantees to all the States and  
institutions, the Northern States and  
Congress under their control, combin-  
ed together, to assail and destroy slave-  
ry in the South. The Southern States  
did nothing to vindicate their rights and  
arrest this course of things.—The Mex-  
ican war broke out; and instead of that  
patriotic co-operation of all sections  
of the Union, which would have taken  
place in the better days of the Repub-  
lic to bring it to a just and honorable  
conclusion, in the very first appropri-  
ation bill to carry it on, the North en-  
deavored to thrust the subject of slave-  
ry. Throughout the war, they kept up  
the agitation; thus clearly manifesting  
their determination that the general  
government, in none of its operations,  
internal or external, shall be exempt  
from the introduction of this danger-  
ous subject. The war closed with  
honor; and immense territory was ad-  
ded to the United States. Their pre-  
vious threats were realized; and the  
non-slaveholding States immediately  
claim the right to exclude the people  
of the Southern States from all the ter-  
ritory acquired, and to appropriate it  
to themselves. If this pretension a-  
rose from a mere lust of power, it  
would be hard to bear the superiority  
and mastery it implies. It would de-  
grade the Southern States from being  
the equals of the Northern States, to a  
position of colonial inferiority. But  
when your exclusion is not from a mere  
lust of power, but is only a further  
step in the progress of things aiming  
at the abolition of slavery in the States  
by the extension and multiplication of  
non-slaveholding States in the Union,  
the pretension is seen to be as alarm-  
ing as it is insulting. The Southern  
States, in their legislatures, set forth  
with great unanimity the rights in our  
territories belonging to them in com-  
mon with the Northern States and de-  
termination to maintain them; and find-  
ing in the Northern States no disposi-  
tion to abate their demands the con-  
vention in which we are assembled,  
has been brought together to take coun-  
sel as to the course the Southern States  
should pursue, for the maintenance of  
their rights, liberty and honor.

Such is a brief, but imperfect state-  
ment of past transactions; and they  
force upon us the question, in what  
condition do they place the Southern  
States? And first, what is their con-  
dition in Congress? The time was  
when our representatives in Congress  
were neither offered nor would they en-  
dure, reproach in your behalf. But for  
many years past they have heard you  
in Congress habitually required by the  
most opprobrious epithets on account  
of the institution of slavery. If their  
spirits are yet unbroken, they must be  
chilled by a sense of humiliation at the  
insults they daily receive as your rep-  
resentatives. You are arraigned as  
criminals. Slavery is dragged into  
every debate, and Congress has be-  
come little else, than a grand instru-  
ment in the hands of abolitionists to  
degrade and ruin the South. Instead  
of peace and protection, aggression, and  
insult on the South characterize its  
proceedings and councils. And what  
is your condition with respect to your  
sister States? Where is that respect  
and comity, which (due from all nations  
toward each other) is more especially  
due from States bound together in a  
confederacy and which was once dis-  
played in all their intercourse? In-  
stead of respect and sympathy—den-  
unciation and hostility, on account of  
your institution of slavery, have for  
years past characterized the commu-  
nications addressed to you by the North-  
ern States. And what is your condi-  
tion in the Union? The non-slave-  
holding States stand combined, not only  
to wrest from you your common  
property, but to place upon your front  
the brand of inferiority. You are not  
to extend, on account of your institu-  
tions, but they are to increase and  
multiply, that the shame and sin of  
slavery, may by their philanthropic a-  
gency, be extinguished from amongst  
you. But the worst feature of your  
condition is, that it is progressive.—  
As low as humiliating as it now may be  
it is destined, if not arrested to a lower  
depth. Every effect is a cause; and  
the spirit of fanaticism brooks no delay  
in the progress it creates. If you were  
to yield everything the North now re-  
quires—abolish slavery in the District  
of Columbia—submit to be legislated  
pirates for conveying slaves from one  
another—let trial by jury and the writ  
of Habeas Corpus wrest from you in

the Northern States every fugitive slave  
—give up all your territories to swell  
Northern arrogance and predominance  
—would things stop there? These are  
all means aiming at one great end—  
the abolition of slavery in the States.—  
Surrendering one of these means you  
will not inflame the power by which  
another will be exacted—and when all  
are conquered, will the evil be arrested?  
In fifty years, twenty new non-slave-  
holding States may be added to the  
Union, whilst some which are now  
slaveholding, may become non-slave-  
holding States. There then, will be  
no need as now, openly to put aside  
the constitution to reach their object.—  
If they will design to do it, the non-  
slaveholding States will then have the  
power by two thirds in Congress and  
three fourths of the States to amend  
the constitution; and then have its ex-  
press sanction to consummate their pol-  
icy: Your condition is progressive.

If from the past transaction we have  
narrated, we learn our condition in the  
Union—they teach us also, that our  
past policy of non action and submis-  
sion to aggression cannot bring us  
peace and safety. When the doors of  
Congress were thrown open to agita-  
tion on the subject of slavery, if the  
Southern States had moved with ener-  
gy to avert a state of things unconsti-  
tutional itself and surely tending to  
bring the slaveholding and non-slave-  
holding States into collision—although  
late, it might not have been too late  
to stop subsequent encroachments upon  
our rights. But the Southern States  
were passive, and their forbearance  
has had effect of inspiring the Northern  
people with the belief, either that we  
value a union with them more than  
we value the institution of slavery or  
that we dare not move from a  
conscious inability to protect ourselves.  
You have ungenerously stood still,  
whilst our supporters and the defenders  
of the constitution in the Northern States  
in their efforts to protect you from the  
agitations of slavery in Congress, have  
been politically annihilated or have  
turned your foes. You have tamely  
acquiesced—until, to hate and perse-  
cute the South has become a high pas-  
sport to honor and power in the Union.  
You have unwisely stood still, whilst  
year after year the volume of anti-slave-  
ry policy and sympathy has swollen in-  
to unanimity throughout all the non-  
slaveholding States, and the section  
of the Union now face each other in  
stern collision. You have waited, un-  
til the constitution of the United States  
is in danger of being abolished—or  
of becoming what the majority in  
Congress think proper to make it.—  
That great principle on which our sys-  
tem of free government rest—of so di-  
viding the powers of government—  
that to a common government, only  
those powers should be granted, which  
must affect all the people composing  
it, equally in their operation—whilst  
all powers over all interests local or  
sectional, should be reserved to local or  
sectional governments—is in danger of  
being uprooted from their constitution.  
Local and sectional interests absorb  
the time and business of Congress and  
thus a sectional despotism, totally ir-  
responsible to the people of the South—  
constituted or the representatives in  
Congress from the non-slaveholding  
States—ignorant of our feelings, con-  
dition and institutions—reigns at  
Washington. These are the fruits of  
your past forbearance and submission.

If we look into the nature of things  
such results will not seem to be either  
new or strange. There is but one con-  
dition, in which one people can be safe  
under the dominion of another people  
and that is, when their interest are en-  
tirely identical. Then, the dominant  
cannot oppress the subjects people  
without oppressing themselves. The  
identity of interest between them, is the  
security for right government. But as  
this identity can scarcely ever exist  
between any two people, history bears  
but one testimony as the fate of a sub-  
ject people. They have always been  
compelled to minister to the prosperity  
and aggrandizement of their masters.  
If this has always been the case under  
the ordinary difference of interests and  
feelings which exist between States,  
how much more certainly must the ex-  
perience of history be realized between  
the people of the Northern and South-  
ern States. Here is a difference of  
climate and productions throughout a  
territory stretching along the whole  
belt of the temperate zone, affecting  
the pursuits and characters of the peo-  
ple inhabiting it. But the great dif-  
ference—the one great difference—the  
greatest which can exist among a peo-  
ple, is the institution of slavery. This  
alone sets apart the Southern States as  
a peculiar people—with whom inde-  
pendence as to their internal policy, is

the condition of their existence. They  
must rule themselves or perish. Every  
colony in the world were African  
slavery existed, with one exception,  
has been destroyed; and if this has been  
the case under the old and effete gov-  
ernments of Europe, will it not pre-  
vail under the dominion of the restless  
people of the Northern States? They  
do not practically recognize the inferi-  
ority of the African to the Caucasian  
races. They do not realize, because  
the circumstances of their condition  
do not compel them to realize the im-  
possibility of an amalgamation between  
the races. Exempt from the institu-  
tion of slavery it is not surprising that  
their sympathies should be against us,  
whilst the dogma on which they profess  
to build their system of Free govern-  
ment—the absolute rule of the majority—  
leaves no barrier to their power in the  
affairs of the general government and  
leads them to its consolidation. Reli-  
gion too, false or real—fires their en-  
thusiasm against an institution, which  
many of its professors believed to be in  
consistent with its principles and pre-  
cepts. To expect forbearance from  
such a people under such circumstan-  
ces, towards the institution of slavery  
is manifestly vain. If they have been  
false to the compact made with us in  
the constitution, and have allowed pas-  
sion and prejudice to master reason  
they have only exemplified the frat-  
rity and fallibility of our nature, which  
has produced the necessity of all gov-  
ernments, and which if unchecked, ever  
produces wrong. Institution of slave-  
ry having once entered the popular  
mind of the non-slaveholding States,  
for action and control, the rest is in-  
evitable. If unrestrained by us they will  
be swept from the broad and fertile  
South. The nature of things therefore  
independent of experience, teaches us  
that there can be no safety in submis-  
sion.

To submit to evils, however great  
while they are endurable is the dispo-  
sition of every people—especially of  
an agricultural people, living apart, and  
having no association in their pursuits,  
and not alone with those who have the  
power or the will to destroy it. A mi-  
nority, by submission, may as much  
betray the constitution, as the majority  
by aggression. The constitution does  
not protect a majority; for they have  
all the powers of the government in  
their hands and can protect themselves.  
The limitations of a constitution are de-  
signed to protect the minority—those  
who have no power, against those who  
have it. Hence, the great motive and  
duty of self-protection is peculiar to a  
minority, independent of that faith to  
the constitution which they owe in com-  
mon with the majority. They must  
protect themselves, and protect the  
constitution, and if they fail in this  
double duty, they are at least as culp-  
able as those who, in aggressing upon  
their rights, overthrow the constitution.  
And the public opinion of the world is  
in conformity with these views.—  
The oppressor is hated—but the dis-  
satisfied oppressed is despised. More  
respect follows the tyrant than the  
slave who submits to his power. The  
Southern States therefore although a  
majority are not exempt from the re-  
sponsibility of preserving the constitu-  
tion and in preserving it to protect  
themselves.

In what way shall they preserve the  
constitution and protect themselves.  
As a general rule, it is undoubtedly  
true, that when, in a government like  
ours a constitution is violated by a ma-  
jority, who alone can violate it in mat-  
ters of legislation, it cannot be restored  
to its integrity through the ordinary  
means of the government; for these  
means, being under the control of the  
majority, are not available to the ma-  
jority. It is for this reason, that fre-  
quent elections of our rulers take place  
in our system of free government, in  
order that the people, by their direct  
intervention, may change the majority.  
But this resource cannot avail us in the  
violations of the constitution, which  
now press and harass the South. By  
changing their representatives, how  
can the people of the South affect the  
majority in Congress and restore the  
constitution? Their Representatives are  
true; and have done all that men can  
do, to preserve the constitution from  
the aggressions of the majority. Re-  
moving them, and putting other Re-  
presentatives in Congress, could have  
no effect in restoring the constitution.  
It has been broken by the representa-  
tives of the people of the Northern  
States, who sustain them in their vio-  
lations of the constitution. It is clear  
that the ballot-box in the South is pow-  
erless for its protection. And the same  
causes which induce the violations of  
the constitution by the Northern major-

ity, prevents its restoration to its integ-  
rity. Throughout the Northern States,  
there has been no indication of any  
change in their policy. On the contrary,  
against the South is greater in the  
present Congress than in the last; fol-  
lowing the usual course of every suc-  
cessive election for years past. Nor  
have we seen in the action of the States  
with few exceptions, any proof of a  
returning sense of justice to us, or of  
reverence for the constitution. Several  
of them, lest false inferences might  
be drawn as to their position, have  
taken care lately to reiterate in the  
most offensive forms their former de-  
clarations against our rights; and when  
a great Senator, representing one of  
them, anxious for the perpetuation of  
the Union, has ventured to advocate  
something of justice to the South, he  
has been rebuked by the Legislature  
of the State he represents, and virtu-  
ally denounced for his fidelity to the  
constitution. This resource then, under  
the ordinary operations of the consti-  
tution, is of no avail. And how is it  
with the present Congress, the only  
other source or redress in the usual ad-  
ministration of the constitution? For  
six months it has been in session, and  
during this whole period of time slave-  
ry has been the absorbing topic of dis-  
cussion and agitation. Yet nothing  
has been done to heal the discontents  
which so justly exist in the South, or  
restore a bleeding constitution. All  
we have received have been bitter de-  
nunciations of our institutions by many  
members of Congress, and threats to  
coerce us into submission. Although  
nothing has been done, a report has  
been made in the Senate by a commit-  
tee of thirteen members, which is now  
pending in that body; and as the mea-  
sures it proposes have been pressed  
upon the South as worthy of her accep-  
tance, we deem it proper to lay before  
you a brief consideration of the matters  
it contains.

This Report embraces four distinct  
measures—1st the admission of Cali-  
fornia as a State, with the exclusion of  
slavery in her constitution. 2d. The  
Territorial Governments to be erected  
over the territories of Utah and New  
Mexico, with nearly one half of Texas  
to be added to the latter. 3rd. The  
prohibition of the slave trade in the  
District of Columbia, and 4th. provis-  
ions for the recapture of fugitive slave  
in non-slaveholding States. To under-  
stand whether these measures are con-  
sistent with our rights and worthy of  
our acceptance, each of them must be  
considered separately.

The South is excluded by the bill  
from the whole of that part of Califor-  
nia lying on the Pacific, including one  
hundred and fifty thousand square  
miles of territory; and if this is done by  
the legislation of Congress, the mode  
in which it is done is of no importance.  
California belongs to the United States  
and all action by the individuals in that  
territory; whether from the United  
States or from the rest of the world,  
appropriating the soil to themselves or  
erecting a government over it, is of no  
validity. They constitute a people in  
no proper sense of the term; but are  
citizens of the States or countries from  
which they have come, and to which  
they still owe their allegiance. When  
therefore Congress attempts to carry  
out and confirm the acts of these in-  
dividuals, erecting California into a state  
and excluding slavery therefrom, it is  
the same thing as if Congress had origi-  
nally passed a law to this effect, with-  
out the intervention of those individ-  
uals. The exclusion of slavery from  
California is done by the act of Con-  
gress, and by no other authority. The  
constitution of California; and the Wil-  
mot proviso it contains, is the Wilmot  
proviso passed and enforced by the leg-  
islation of Congress. Here then, is  
that exclusion from this territory by the  
act of Congress, which almost every  
Southern State in the Union has declar-  
ed she would not submit to plainly  
and practically enforced by this bill.—  
A free people cannot be satisfied with  
the mode in which they are deprived of  
their rights. A sovereign State will  
disdain to inquire in what manner she  
is stripped of her property, and de-  
graded from an equality with her sister  
States. It is enough, that the out-  
rage is done. The mode is of little  
consequence. There is therefore in  
the mode of extending the Wilmot  
proviso over the territory of California  
presented by the bill, nothing to miti-  
gate the indignation of the Southern  
States; or to baffle their determination  
to redress the wrong, if inflicted. They  
are excluded from the whole territory  
of California, a territory extensive  
enough to contain four large States.